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NATURE CONSERVATION NEWS

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A CYPRESS SWAMP IS PRESERVED

On Saturday March 23, in Prince Frederick, Maryland, deeds were signed transferring title to the Battle Creek Cypress Swamp to the Nature Conservancy. Witnessing the ceremony were representatives of the Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland and members of the Calvert County and Maryland and District of Columbia Battle Creek Cypress Swamp Committee.

Although the transfer of title has taken place, there still remains some $4,500 which must be raised. A deficit of this amount was incurred in completing the transaction. More than 100 individuals and organizations have contributed $5,500 thus far toward the preservation of the swamp. The second part of the Calvert County project--the 21-acre Hellen Creek Hemlock Preserve--was purchased in August, 1956.

The Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland, Inc., played a major role in assuring the acquisition of the Battle Creek Cypress Forest when they donated $1,500 toward the campaign. In announcing the donation, Mrs. H. K. Douglas Cotton of Baltimore, president of the Maryland Federation, said, "Our members are most enthusiastic over the prospect of sharing in so worthy a project and look forward to continuing to work towards the necessary development of the cypress grove...The opportunity of presenting a gift of such inestimable and lasting value to not only the people of Maryland, but to their children's children was eagerly and unanimously accepted by the Executive Board.

"It is the fond hope of the Board of the Federated Garden Clubs of Maryland, Inc., that this contribution will stimulate every Garden Club to enter into the preservation project and to play its part in making the venture a complete success."

DOME ISLAND ENDOWMENT FUND

In a ceremony earlier this year, at the annual meeting of the Federated Garden Clubs of New York State, Mrs. Dunham C. Jones of Brooklyn, President, presented the Conservancy with a check for $1,000 to be applied toward the Dome Island Endowment Fund. Dome Island in Lake George, New York, was acquired by the Conservancy as a natural area in December.

In announcing the Federation's donation, Mrs. Jones said, "It was a most generous gesture of Mr. Apperson to give his precious sanctuary, Dome Island, one of the few remaining examples of uninterrupted natural processes, to Nature Conservancy for preservation. The Federated Garden Clubs of New York State, Inc. is happy to contribute $1,000 toward the Dome Island Sanctuary Endowment."

Mrs. Wirt Darrow of Hollis, Conservation Committee Chairman, also deserves much credit for her part in bringing this project to the attention of the Federation. The donation was made from the Life Membership Educational Fund in memory of Mrs. Ralph Hinchman. The garden club donation brings the endowment fund to $14,000. A total of $20,000 is needed for the fund which will maintain the island preserve and aid in carrying on an educational program.

DEADLINE NEARS ON BECKLEY BOG

May 31, 1957, is the deadline for saving one of the finest bogs in Connecticut. The Conservancy has an option to purchase 270 acres in Norfolk County including Beckley Bog, Beckley Pond, a sedge meadow on the south and wooded slopes to the east and west. Thus far some $13,500 has been donated, leaving $7,500 still to be raised. Co-chairmen of the Beckley Bog Committee are William A. Niering and Richard H. Goodwin.

WESTERN NOTES -- by WILLIAM DRAKE

WILDERNESS CONFERENCE

The fifth in a series of Wilderness Conferences, held every two years under the sponsorship of the Sierra Club, took place in San Francisco on March 15 and 16. Each conference has enlarged its scope until now it presents the problem of wilderness preservation in the broad setting of the exploitation of all resources.

The root of the problem was vividly described by Lowell Sumner, biologist for the National Park Service, who pictured our civilization as a biological phenomenon destined--if the present rate continues--to over-populate, eat up its own resource base, and collapse. Sharing this pessimism but looking for a cause of hope, Starker Leopold pointed to something new in human history: the sudden flowering in less than a century of the idea that nature should be respected and preserved, with a moral fervor.

Competition for use of the land emerged as the practical problem of the times, and directors of five federal bureaus were present to explain the protective

WILDERNESS CONFERENCE (cont.):
policies for wilderness under their jurisdiction. Not only protection of dedicated areas but enlightened policies of land management for non-wild areas appeared to be the lesson of the conference.

(Editor's Note: Conservancy Board of Governors on March 3, 1957, passed a resolution endorsing the proposed National Wilderness Preservation System Act.)

MT. SAN JACINTO

Renewal of the San Jacinto Winter Park Authority contract to build a multi-million dollar tramway from Palm Springs, California, to San Jacinto State Park was refused in a December, 1956, session of the State Park Commission. This followed a vigorous and well-planned presentation by conservation groups attending the public hearing.

Floundering in financial instability, documented by the Sierra Club, the Authority had been unable to construct elaborate commercial facilities that would have carried "fair-weather loafers," as they were described by Roland C. Ross of the Desomount Club, to the 10,800-foot mountain-top primitive area. The state park is also a valuable natural area, Dr. Ross's testimony declared.

Assumed to have been invaded by boreal flora and fauna during the last ice age, it is now an isolated remnant surrounded by desert country, said to be the most southerly alpine spot in North America. As such, it is a fragile and unique area that responds sensitively to human pressure, and therefore needs permanently the degree of protection it now has.

Defenders of the area, led by a local citizens' group and including virtually all conservation societies in the state, are now aiming for a repeal of the legislative act which created the Authority in 1945.

WESTERN ADVISORY BOARD

A Western Advisory Board has been appointed to help guide the activities of the newly established western office of the Nature Conservancy. Chairman of the new body is Edward N. Munns of Concord, California, formerly head of watershed research for the U. S. Forest Service.

The Board also includes C. M. Goethe of Sacramento and Reed W. Fautin of the University of Wyoming, both members of the national Board of Governors; James A. Macnab of Portland State College, Oregon; Curtis L. Newcombe of Lafayette, California, a former vice-president of the Nature Conservancy; Jean M. Linsdale, director of the Hastings Natural History Reservation, Carmel Valley, California; A. Starker Leopold and Herbert L. Mason of the University of California, Berkeley; Philip A. Munz, Director of Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Garden, Claremont, California; and Carl Wolf, Sespe Land and Water Company, Fillmore, California.

The Board has met twice in Berkeley to consider potential preservation projects, to launch a natural-area survey of the State of California, and to lay initial plans for future publicity and fund-raising and for the Nature Conservancy's annual membership meeting at Stanford University in August. The group will be enlarged in time to provide representation from the entire western region.

REGIONAL NOTES

CONNECTICUT:

Sasquanaug Park in Southport, Connecticut, has been the scene of considerable controversy in recent months. Since the challenge of its tax exempt status by town meeting members, the debate "Is it a park?" has gathered many supporters for the affirmative--including Mrs. Alexander R. Thompson, President of the Fairfield Garden Club.

In her statement defending the area as a park, Mrs. Thompson says, "We Fairfielders, who are proud of what has been a lovely New England town, must awake to the need of preserving all the natural beauty that is left. Don't let realtors quibble about the nomenclature of Sasquanaug Park in an attempt to wrest it from us.

"It is not a city 'park', with concrete paths, rows of benches, and people walking their dogs--thank heavens! It is a lovely wild park in our midst, and it should be allowed to follow its natural course forever."

FLORIDA:

In this section of the country, a state park controversy has been raging around the Myakka River State Park. In the middle of 1956, the Florida Board of Parks and Historic Monuments executed an easement giving the Florida Power and Light Company an enlarged right of way--totaling a 170 foot wide path--for construction of power transmission lines across the park. Strong objections were raised by the Florida Audubon Society and the Florida Federation of Garden Clubs.

Recent word from Miss Ethel L. Larsen, Conservation Consultant for the General Federation of Women's Clubs, indicates that the Florida Power and Light Company has relinquished the right of way, by changing the alignment to utilize the Atlantic Coast Line railroad right of way.

ILLINOIS:

A widespread effort to preserve a prairie strip of rare flowers and grasses owned by the Greater Rockford Airport Authority has resulted in a pledge by the Authority to protect the area "if at all possible."

Dr. Egbert W. Fell, Rockford expert on native plants, instituted the campaign after learning the land was being considered for winter grazing of cattle. The tract is a long, narrow, south-facing, gravelly slope. It occupies the break between the Kishwaukee River floodplain and the glacial outwash terrace on which the airport is situated.

The campaign has gathered support from many individuals including Hal Nelson, managing editor of the Rockford Morning Star. Dr. W. D. Klimstra, associate professor of zoology of Southern Illinois University, Carbondale, has commented, "The efforts of Mr. Hal Nelson of the Rockford newspapers are indicative of the kind of spirit and effort necessary to promote public consciousness of the necessity to preserve this prairie strip."

KANSAS:

Ten acres of unbroken tall-grass prairie and the remainder of a 150-acre farm in southern Jefferson County has been acquired by the University of Kansas

KANSAS (cont.):
recently through the help of John D. Rockefeller, Jr., of New York City. The prairie acreage joins seven additional prairie acres to the south on the University of Kansas Natural History Reservation. The area will be managed by the department of zoology and will be available for observational use by other departments.

NEW YORK: Long Island:

A strong local group is working hard to preserve about 110 acres of woodland known as "Lord's Woods" near the Queens County line. Mrs. Roland C. Bergh, Conservation Chairman of the Garden Club of Lawrence, one of the leaders in this effort, indicates that an attempt is being made to form a park district or to have the area set up as a town or county park. The tract is the last remaining natural woodland in southwestern Nassau County.

OHIO:

In December, 1956, Cleveland's Museum of Natural History acquired Fern Lake, a small bog and lake tract about four miles southwest of Burton in Geauga County, Ohio. The area is expected to be of great value in nature study and was made available through the efforts of Mr. and Mrs. Harold T. Clark. Tamarack trees and rare forms of shrews and warblers are found at Fern Lake. The Museum also recently acquired a tract on Kelleys Island in Lake Erie.

OKLAHOMA:

The long standing battle between the Department of the Interior and the Department of the Army over annexation of 10,700 acres of the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge by Fort Sill has been solved--at least for the time being. A top-level meeting of Interior and Army authorities took place on February 27, when a cooperative agreement was reached under which the Army will use 3,600 acres across the southern tip of the refuge as a buffer zone only. All of the refuge land will remain under the jurisdiction of the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service.

WILDERNESS AND REFUGES

Though carefully disguised in Department of Agriculture news releases as a 32,000 acre gain in Oregon wilderness, the recent decision by Acting Secretary True D. Morse actually designated 53,000 acres of the former Three Sisters Primitive Area for multiple-use management. In arriving at the decision, the USDA pointed out that, "the importance of wilderness as a resource was fully recognized but it is necessary to maintain a proper balance between areas set aside for wilderness and those for multiple-purpose use."

In accordance with long-range Forest Service policy, areas classified under earlier regulation as "primitive areas" are being systematically reclassified as "wilderness areas" and "wild areas." At the same time, some boundary changes such as this one are being made. The 53,000 acre area dropped as wilderness is located west of Horse Creek.

Two new wild areas--Mt. Washington and Diamond Peak--also in Oregon make up the gain in wilderness acreage referred to by Agriculture Department sources. The three newly designated areas, added to seven already established, provide some 747,983 acres devoted to wilderness in Oregon.

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During December 1956, the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission authorized acquisition of 4,409 acres of land as additions to nine national wildlife refuges. Leasing of 2,728 acres for two refuges in Vermont and Washington was also authorized. The following refuges gained from 25 to 2,293 acres in these December authorizations by the Commission: Missisquoi, Vermont; Columbia, Washington; Okefenokee, Georgia; Chase Lake and Tewaukon, North Dakota; Kentucky Woodlands and Reelfoot, Kentucky; Quivira, Kansas; Shiawassee, Michigan; and Santee, South Carolina.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

The 1957 Nominating Committee of Nature Conservancy consisting of Joseph J. Hickey, chairman; William A. Niering, and Daniel Smiley, is currently working on nominations for officers and Board of Governors. Members wishing to propose candidates for any of the four officers and eight members of the Board of Governors to be elected at the August 28 annual meeting at Stanford University, California, are urged to send their suggestions to Dr. Joseph J. Hickey, University of Wisconsin, Madison, immediately.

SOURCE OF CREATIVE THOUGHT

"Poets of all times and places, most painters and sculptors, the majority of great writers, many abstract thinkers, the greatest scientists have avowed an intimate need of nature. In some of them the thirst for natural things, for the full sky, landscapes, trees, flowers, wild animals, the tang of the autumn wind, the tumbling seas and tranquil lakes, has been an obsession. They have truly fed upon nature in all of its aspects. The implication is clear that severed from nature man's imagination and inquiring mind would diminish, perhaps wither utterly."

The appearance of an effective new voice for conservation of nature is a welcome event. And when it comes from a highly articulate foreign correspondent and political analyst, rather than from a professional scientist, it may be doubly welcome. We scientists have been crying in the wilderness about the importance to the human race of preserving a little of nature for some time, with unflatteringly small effect, even on our fellow scientists. A professional writer with an established audience may well accomplish more--witness Bernard DeVoto--and when he combines breadth of vision with effective writing as does Edgar Ansel Mowrer he is almost certain to.

Seldom, if ever, has the place of the natural areas movement been as effectively defined (though it is not mentioned as such) in its relation to the general picture as in Mowrer's recent article entitled "Sawdust, Seaweed and Synthetics", in the Saturday Review, December 8, 1956. The above quotation is a sample. For the full effect of the article one can only say, "Get it and read it!"

--F. Raymond Fosberg

IN MEMORIAM

ASA O. WEESE

Born at Hutchinson, Minnesota, November 7, 1885;
died at Norman, Oklahoma, November 20, 1955.

A. O. Weese received his bachelor's degree in 1909 from the University of Minnesota and continued graduate work there in 1909-1910. In 1911 he was appointed assistant professor of biology at the University of New Mexico and advanced to professor in 1914. In 1918 he became director of hygiene and then acting dean of the University. As dean he was authorized to select a candidate for president, and his candidate was appointed the following year. While at New Mexico, Professor Weese published a number of papers on the physiological relations of arid grassland animals to moisture.

He received his M.A. degree from the University of Illinois in 1917 and his Ph.D. in 1922. His thesis applied quantitative methods in analyzing animal populations of an Illinois forest.

In 1922 Dr. Weese took a position as head of the biology department at James Millikan University. In 1924 he was appointed professor of zoology at the University of Oklahoma where he continued to serve until his death. He was not only a teacher and scientific investigator, but a graduate advisor in zoology, and, for a time, a dean of the graduate college. He was also ecologist for the Oklahoma Biological Survey and editor for the survey publications. As a teacher, Dr. Weese spent summers at the Puget Sound Biological Station (1925 and 1929) and at the Rocky Mountain Biological Laboratory, Gothic, Colorado (1926-1937). He was president of the latter institution from 1937 on. His broad knowledge of the biological sciences made a lasting, good impression on students and fellow faculty members alike. His excellent advice was sought often by both groups on a great variety of problems and particularly in the field of plant and animal population study. He was a leading member of the Oklahoma Academy of Sciences and its president from 1931 to 1933.

Professor Weese had a long-standing interest in natural areas. He wrote the account on New Mexico in the Naturalists Guide to the Americas (1926). He was a member of the grassland committee of the National Research Council, Washington, D. C., and participated in inspection tours to select an area for a grassland monument in 1933 (Texas), 1935 (North Dakota), 1937 (Nebraska), and 1938 (South Dakota). In this connection he made a personal inspection tour of northwestern New Mexico. At Oklahoma he made a continuing effort to have the University purchase a local grassland tract for use in instruction and research in grassland ecology. Partly because Oklahoma laws seemed most favorable, the work of organizing the Grassland Research Foundation fell to his lot.

A. O. Weese served the Ecological Society of America in a variety of capacities. He was secretary-treasurer from 1920 to 1930, and the Society's president in 1931. He served as a member of the executive committee from 1937 until 1941 and on the board of editors of Ecology in 1928 and 1936-1938. In addition he served on the Committee for the Study of Plant and Animal Communities (1937), the Constitutional Committee (1941), and the Committee on Organ Pipe National Monument (chairman, 1941).

Dr. Weese played an important part in the development of the Society's Committee on the Preservation of Natural Conditions in the United States, serving as its chairman from 1937 to 1940 and remaining a member of its executive group until at least 1944. When the Ecological Society voted the Committee on Preservation of Natural Conditions out of existence, Dr. Weese was one of the twelve persons who banded together to set up the Ecologists Union. After the change he held a place on the governing board of the Union and was very successful in securing the affiliation of local societies and in securing their contributions. In 1950 he became president of the Ecologists Union. He served two years and presided over the meetings at New York, 1950, and at Columbus, 1951, when the name of the organization was changed to the Nature Conservancy.

His broad knowledge is reflected in the variety of research projects which he undertook, for he made contributions in invertebrate and vertebrate zoology and in aquatic as well as terrestrial biology.

--Richard Graber
Victor E. Shelford

The Nature Conservancy is an independent member-governed organization dedicated to saving America's heritage of wild nature. Its specific object is to preserve natural areas as "living museums" of the primeval wilderness. Such tracts are precious for their scientific, educational, and esthetic values. They also afford a home for the multitude of kinds of living things that would otherwise vanish from the earth, destroyed by our civilization.

The work of the organization began in 1917 under the direction of a committee of the Ecological Society of America. In 1946 the Ecologists Union was formed to take over these tasks. In 1950 its name was changed to the Nature Conservancy.

The members of the Nature Conservancy invite you to join in this work. Membership is open to both individuals and organizations. A contribution of $3 or more entitles you to annual membership, one of $100 or more to life membership and one of $1,000 or more to patron membership. Your contribution is an allowable income tax deduction.

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